



CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)

The Mexicans labored under disadvantage on all hands. They were wholly unarmed, and the suddenness and strangeness of the attack struck them with a degree of astonishment that nearly upset their powers. Within five minutes from the time that Mac Wayne reached the deck the eight men who were on deck were down and bound. The feat of knocking them down was very easily performed for when the Yankees first came upon them they had all gathered wonderingly about the fallen man, and thus they began to fall ere they knew any more had left the boat.

The outcries of the man at the helm soon brought Captain Migdon to the deck, but he was knocked down ere he had taken a dozen steps forward, and in a moment more his feet were in a noose formed on the end of the topgallant ladders. His hands were then bound behind him with a piece of rope stuff, and he was then laid away in the waist. The next move was to the wheel, where they took and bound the Mexican, and placed Adams in his place. Then they hastened to the fore-hatch, where they found Sloan just running the risk of being overcome, one of his blows having missed his object, and a man having turned away by him. But the business was quickly settled now. There were two of the men below already stunned by Sloan's blows, and the other six quickly surrendered upon being assured that no harm should come to them further than imprisonment. The next work was to put the Mexicans in irons. The captain was the last one they came to.

"Well, senor," said Clarence, as he and Max approached the fallen chieftain, "you see the fortunes of war have changed."

It was some moments before Migdon spoke; but finally he opened his lips, and his tone presented a strange mixture of anger, regret and surprise.

"Pardon have thee, thou Yankee villain! But how did you do it? Tell me how."

"Why," answered Clarence, "this is but part of what we had planned long before you thought you'd captured us. This was all arranged when we commenced to shoot your men on the chase."

"But how did you do it? Tell me that. How did you get those iron off?"

"Don't you see—we haven't got them off yet. We have only bitten them in two."

"Fifty you couldn't bite your lies off before they drop from your mouth," uttered the captain, showing a feeling of anger.

"Perhaps we might if we had them to practice upon," returned Clarence, with a smile. "But come, we must have you try on some of your own rifles, for we have concluded to relieve you. The fact is, that we didn't think hardly right, that we should enjoy the sail without doing our share of the work."

Migdon looked as though he would like to show fight, but he probably made up his mind that he should not benefit himself much thereby, so he suffered the irons to be put on.

"Where do you mean to run?" he asked, with some anxiety manifesting itself amid his anger, as soon as the irons were on.

"You will probably be landed somewhere near Galveston," Clarence returned.

Migdon seemed on the point of asking some favor, but he now changed his mind, and remained silent.

"Look here," said Max, after Migdon had been stowed away between two of the guns, "what do ye s'pose has become of the schooner?"

"O, she's probably out of sight to leeward by this time," returned Howard.

get you into a scrape without helping you out of it."

"I will."

"Adieu."

Ere long after this the boat started back towards the brig, while Clarence Howard, throwing his bundle across his shoulder, and bidding Peter to follow, turned away towards the country. There were gloom and danger ahead, but he faltered not. Hope lightened the former, and he had no fear for the latter.

CHAPTER XIII.

Slowly and wearily Irene and Cassandra moved on their way. It was a long distance for them, in a strange way, and at a strange work; but they stopped not until they had reached the small house with the watering place before it. A few rods beyond this they walked, and then Cassandra proposed sitting down.

"Let us move on to the turn," said Irene. "I am weak and weary. The dawn of day is close at hand, and we will not stop here. People may come out from this house."

So on they moved. It was only a quarter of a mile further, but it seemed a long, long distance to them. Every step now seemed but an expiring effort, and the fainting nerves were busy only with carrying the messages of pain to the brain. But the corner was reached at length. Down the narrow path they turned, and at the distance of a few rods they stopped beneath a large sycamore tree, and sank down upon the light turf.

Irene St. Marc slept very soundly for awhile; but at length she began to dream. She dreamed that she had done a murder—that she had struck her father with a dagger and killed him. To avoid apprehension she had fled from her home, and was in a dense wilderness, where the giant trees grew thick, and the under-wood was rank and matted. In her fright she turned to go back, when she was stopped short by finding a gigantic alligator directly before her—his monster jaws opened wide, and his long, sharp teeth gleaming in the strange light that came from his glaring eyes.

With a deep groan Irene started back and turned to flee. But lo! the way was closed up behind her. Where she was now she had before seen a narrow path she now found a tangled mass of cypress shoots and thorny vines; and wound all in among the dark foliage were innumerable serpents, whose slimy folds gleamed with horrid distinctness, and whose heads were raised as if ready for a blow at the intruder. In her agony the wanderer turned again. The alligator had grown larger in bulk, flames of fire were issuing from his mouth, and she felt that she was burning up. Her face was hot—she was burning—burning—when a low sound seemed to issue from the monster's throat, and it distinctly pronounced her name.

"Irene! Irene!"

The maiden uttered a quick, sharp cry, and started up. She opened her eyes and gazed about. For awhile she was completely blinded by the dazzling brightness that surrounded her; but when she did get her eyes open she found the sun shining down hotly upon her, while Cassandra, who sat by her side, held one of her hands, and was gazing anxiously into her face. But this was not all she saw. Close by, and gazing earnestly upon her, stood a man, and a boy who held a couple of mules by the halters.

"What is it?" asked Cassandra, anxiously. "You are not hurt?"

"No, no—but I had a dream; O, a terrible dream!"

"So did I," returned Cassandra. "I had a dreadful one, and this man was just in time to wake me out of it. We must have slept a long while, for—the sun is far up in the heavens."

The man still stood, only a few feet distant, gazing upon the two girls. He was a native Indian, towards the middle age of life, and very stout and strong. He was by no means a good-looking man, so far as beauty was concerned, but he had a kind look, and Irene thought he gazed sympathizingly upon her.

"Ladies," he said, speaking in very good Spanish, "you will pardon me for waking you, but I found you here, and I knew the sun was burning you up. I passed this way very early this morning, just before daybreak, and you were here then, fast asleep; so I knew you had slept about long enough. Ah, those robes don't hide your sex by daylight."

"You were very kind, sir," returned Irene, gaining courage from the stranger's kind tone. "We walked all night, nearly, and were very tired when we reached here."

"Perhaps you came from the city?" said the Indian, interrogatively.

Irene hesitated.

"You need not fear me," the man said. "We did come from the city, senor."

"And may I ask which way you are going?"

"Why not trust him?" whispered Cassandra, in her mistress' ear. "Perhaps he is going the same way we are, and in all probability will know where we go. So we had better trust him, for these people seldom betray one who engages their honor."

"I will," replied Irene; and turning to the stranger, she said:

"There is a native settlement beyond here, I think."

"Yes, lady, over beyond the hill," he replied.

"We were going there."

"Ah, you know some one there?"

"No, senor. But perhaps you do."

"Yes, I live there."

"Then perhaps you may know one Jacar Xanpa?" Irene said, earnestly.

"Yes," returned the man, with a smile; "though here is a boy who knows him, perhaps better than I do."

"The boy thus alluded to was a bright, intelligent-looking lad, about fourteen years of age, and though rather slight in frame, yet muscular and agile. He gazed up with a quaint smile as the man spoke, and the expression of his countenance wore a puzzled shade."

"However," resumed the man, "though the great book-makers say that a man can't find a more difficult lesson than to learn himself, yet I fancy I have gained a good share of the knowledge. My name is Jacar Xanpa, and this is my son, Zeno."

Irene started to her feet at once, and every shade of doubt left her face.

"Do you know the good priest Father Gonzales Rondo?" she asked.

The smile departed from Xanpa's face, and a look of deep, prayerful gratitude took its place.

"Yes, lady," he returned, in a low key. "I know him well. I am not one who makes long prayers, but I can pray for him."

Well, senor, he directed us to seek Jacar Xanpa, assuring us that he would not only give us shelter, but help us otherwise as well as his means would permit.

"Ay, and he told you truly," cried Xanpa, joyously.

"Since that man stretched forth his hand and saved me from an ignominious death, this is the first time he has given me a commission to perform. But come—I have been away with a burden this morning, and you will find easy seats upon these broad paniers. Trust yourselves to me, and be assured that I will do all for you in my power."

The girls needed no further urging. One of the mules had the regular basket pannier upon his back—a wide basket of cane hanging down upon either side—and into these the fair travelers were assisted by the kind-hearted muleteer. They could sit quite comfortably in the baskets, and the mule seemed to take no heed of the new load his master had unexpectedly picked up. The boy leaped upon the back of the other mule and went on ahead, and his father followed, leading the loaded one.

At length the village was in sight. It was a collection of small cane huts, located close by a small stream that came winding down from the distant mountains. It was a pleasant place, shielded from the hardest winds by high hills, and ornamented by a variety of handsome forest trees. Xanpa's hut was close by the stream, and one of the most comfortable looking ones in the place. When they reached the door, the girls were assisted from their seats, and having given his son charge of the mules, the host conducted his fair companions into his dwelling, where he introduced them to his wife. She was a bright-eyed, pleasant looking woman, not over five-and-thirty, and seemed much pleased with the presence of the newcomers. As soon as the girls were seated, the host called his wife outside, where they remained in conversation some minutes.

"You are at home," the woman said, returning, to Irene. "You shan't wait for anything we've got."

She looked upon the girls with moistened eyes as she spoke, for her thoughts had been called to the time when her lost husband was given back to her. And from that moment Irene felt at ease in the humble cot.

CHAPTER XIV.

On the morning following the flight of Irene and Cassandra, Antonio St. Marc ate his breakfast alone, and then went out. He did not return until near night, and just as he reached his house he found Jilok Tudel there ready to enter. They shook hands quite cordially and then went in, going at once to the host's private room.

"My dear St. Marc," said Tudel, after they had taken seats, "I have got to go to Alvarado. I must start in the morning, early; and shall be back Sunday evening. I thought I would just call and see Irene before I went."

"Certainly," returned St. Marc. "Though I don't suppose she will be anxious to see me, eh?" added Tudel, with a heartless smile.

"Why—to speak the truth, I don't think she will," said St. Marc. "She is not very happy, and perhaps, on the whole, it would be full as well if you let her remain in peace until you return."

"Ah—but I wish to see her; if you have no objections, I'll go and hunt her up."

"O, certainly, if you wish. You will probably find her in her room."

So Tudel started out. He was gone some ten or fifteen minutes, and then he returned.

"Did you not find her?" asked St. Marc.

"Find her? No! Where is she?"

"Where is she?" repeated the host, in surprise. "What do you mean? Did you search for her?"

"Ay—I searched for her, and I inquired for her; and she has not been seen in the house to-day!"

"Not seen—eh?" returned St. Marc, starting to his feet.

"O, don't attempt that," retorted Tudel, in a tone rather heavily spiced with suspicious sarcasm. "But tell me where she is."

"Tell you where she is? Why, if she is not in the house, then I know nothing of her."

"Why did you prevent me from going to see her?" Tudel asked, with a dubious look. "By the host, St. Marc, you must not think to fool me."

"But, my dear man, will you not listen one moment? Who told you that Irene had gone?"

"I don't know what her name is—she's one of your servants."

"I'll call them higher at once and question them. By my soul, I do not think she can have gone off."

As St. Marc thus spoke, he pulled the bell cord, and ere long one of his servants came to the door.

"Send every soul in the house up here at once," he ordered.

The man disappeared, and soon afterwards the servants began to file in. When they were all in, to the number of seven, St. Marc spoke.

"Look ye," he said, rather sternly, "which of you can tell me where my daughter is?"

"It was some time before any one replied; but old Bel at length spoke."

"She hasn't been in the house to-day, senor, I think," the old woman said. "I went up to her room this morning and called to her, but she did not reply, so I thought she was asleep and left her. But when it came ten o'clock and she did not come, I began to fear. I went up again, and this time I called as loud as I could, but got no answer. Her door was locked, and I forced it open—but I found no one in there. I went to her cabinet and dressing case, and I found her jewels all gone. I then went into Cassandra's room and found her gone, too."

For some moments Antonio St. Marc gazed upon his servants in silence.

"Haven't any of the rest of you seen anything of her?" he asked.

But they all shook their heads.

(To be continued.)

Traditions of a Strange Bible.

The Devil's Bible is one of the volumes in the royal library of the royal palace of Stockholm, Sweden. In this library there are 200,000 volumes and 10,000 manuscripts. The Bible is written on 300 prepared asses' skins. There is a tradition that it required 500 years to complete the work, from the eighth to the thirteenth century. But, according to another tradition quite as reliable probably, the book was copied in a single night by the Devil himself assisting, and giving to the monk a portrait of himself for the frontispiece. The Swedish carried the manuscript from a convent in Prague during the "thirty years' war."

The growing Cook County city of BLUE ISLAND, ILLINOIS,

Is just taking another stride in advance. Under Mayor Jacob F. Rehn's vigorous and popular administration, the prosperous old suburban community will shortly possess a noble hillside park along Burr Oak avenue. As in the case of Chicago and Lincoln Park, an ancient cemetery, laid out over half a century ago, will become the new recreation place for the living. Mayor Rehn, on entering upon his sixth term, emphasized his position that no more burials should take place there, since the grounds were overcrowded, and now—so actively are the Mount Greenwood authorities co-operating—the ashes of over half the 800 foresthousen interred in the old graveyard have already been reverently transferred to magnificent Mount Greenwood. Willis N. Knud, superintendent of Mount Greenwood, continues very energetic in the removals, and, as Mount Greenwood deeds to the municipality the old lots taken in part exchange for the new, a beautiful public park of the size of a large block will soon be added to Blue Island's many attractions.

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